

March 21, 2011

Government Administrations and Elections Committee
Room 2200, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

**TESTIMONY OF JEFF PUGLIESE
MIDDLESEX COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

SB 1196-An Act Concerning the Conveyance of Certain Parcels of State Land

My name is Jeff Pugliese and I am the Director of Legislative Affairs at the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce. I am here today to offer the Chamber's strong support for SB 1196, An Act Concerning the Conveyance of Certain Parcels of State Land. The Chamber's particular interest in this bill lies in the section dealing with the proposed land swap in the Town of Haddam. Under this plan, the state would exchange an unused former sand pit, full of shrub, so it could be redeveloped as a tourism destination and a job creator for the local economy. The Riverhouse at Goodspeed Station, a banquet and conference center in Haddam and strong corporate citizen, would receive the state owned land abutting the facility and would develop it in both an economically and environmentally responsible way.

The Riverhouse is offering to exchange a large tract of forest land that would connect Cockaponset State Forest to Route 81 in the Higganum section of Haddam. This proposal would allow DEP and residents of the local community better access to this pristine area of forest in Connecticut's River Valley. Our Chamber believes that the state has the chance to develop a 17-acre sand pit in a way that will create hundreds of jobs, will serve as a continuing source of tax revenue, and will also provide the opportunity to preserve 87 acres of beautiful virgin forest land.

In our view, this is a situation where everyone wins. It is clear to everyone that Connecticut needs economic development projects that will create jobs. This proposal accomplishes just that while simultaneously being conscious of the environment. This is precisely the type of quality project that will help us improve our economy both in Middlesex County and in the State of Connecticut while employing true smart growth initiatives that are environmentally responsible. Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning.